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SUBJECT The Volkshochschulen of Land Saxony-Anhalt.

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1. In the Soviet Zone, Volkshochschulen (VHS - People's Hochschulen (1)) are state-controlled institutions designed to further adult education by offering to members of all levels of society educational opportunities which they can utilize while continuing to hold a job. The VHS, which came into being under order No. 22 of the ZMA on 23 January 1946, were defined in Article 38, paragraph 5 of the DME constitution.

Schools:

2. On 1 December 1949 there were the following VHS in Saxony-Anhalt:

a. Independent VHS:

- 1) Land Volkshochschule - 1
- 2) Land Meinvolkshochschule - under construction
- 3) Kreis Volkshochschulen - 33
- 4) City Volkshochschulen - 8
- 5) Plant Volkshochschulen - 4

46

b. VHS extension courses (Volkshochschulaussenstellen):

- 1) In small cities and villages - 130
- 2) In plants - 88
- 3) At MAS (Machine Landing Stations) - 63
- 4) Evening Oberschulen (2) courses for workers - 4

The VHS of both types total 251.

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3. Land Volkshochschule (3). The Land Volkshochschule, in addition to its regular teaching functions, aids the Land VHS Referent in intellectual and pedagogical matters. It forms a cross-contact (Querverbindung) with the Hochschule through its director (4) and does scientific research in the still undeveloped field of adult education. The Land Volkshochschule develops new teaching methods and also new advertising methods (Werbemethoden), and, by means of week-end courses, conferences, and school-curriculum committees, it accomplishes on the Land level further scientific training of instructors in specialized fields. It also issues a number of learned publications in order to supply school directors and instructors with the scientific material that will help them in organizing their instruction in the VHS. The director of the Land Volkshochschule, like the Director of the Land Heimvolkshochschule, is directly responsible to the Land VHS Referent, while the Kreis, city, and plant VHS are only indirectly responsible to him through the offices of their respective superintendents.
4. Volkshochschulen in plants and various offices: Plant Volkshochschulen have been established on a so-called non-political basis in order to further the political and professional education of the factory workers and employees. Courses in social science, natural science, lectures on electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, materials (Werkstoffkunde), industrial drafting, and preparatory courses for the examination as master workman are conducted at the plants after working hours, and sometimes during the working day. The political subjects are well disguised in the lectures so that the workers will not be apathetic from the very outset. Thus lectures on "Dialectics and History of Materialism" are titled "Philosophy of Modern Man", or "Political Economy" will be called "Why are there both poor and rich men?".
5. The plant Volkshochschulen as well as the extension courses and single courses offered in industrial plants are financed by the plants themselves, so that the students need pay no fee. For example, the Leunawerk contributes DM 30,000 a year to the plant Volkshochschule. Some of the instructors are engineers, technologists, and master workmen, hired directly from the plants.
6. In Saxony-Anhalt there are independent plant Volkshochschulen in the Leuna Chemical Factory, in the Buna Chemical Works, in the Thale Iron Foundry, and in the Wolfen Film and Dyes Factory. Extension courses are to be found in 2 of the larger industries, while single VHS courses are conducted in the smaller industries.
7. In addition to these plant Volkshochschulen, the VHS is to take over all professional courses conducted by the individual trade unions. This decision was made by the FDGB Bundesvorstand after a bitter struggle between the VHS and the IG Handel (Industrial Trade Union for Commerce) over the teaching of business courses such as stenography, typing, bookkeeping, and plant operation (Betriebswirtschaft). The IG did not want to let go of these courses under any circumstances because it got a good income and high profits from them. A stenography course with 20 hours credit cost the student DM 18, so that with a class of 30 students the IG would receive DM 540. Of this amount, DM 120 would be paid out in teachers' salaries, leaving a profit of DM 420. The VHS courses on the other hand cost only DM 6 per person, which amounts to DM 180 for 30 students. Of this, DM 120 is allotted for instructors' salaries, leaving only DM 60 for shorthand books, tablets (Blöcke) and pencils.
8. Up to 1 January 1950, when specialized (innerbetriebliche) training was instituted by the Ministry of Interior in Berlin, the Saxony-Anhalt VHS, in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior in Halle, also conducted a specialized training program for the employees of the Kreis and municipal councils, revenue offices, boards of public works, social security offices,

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credit banks, savings banks, etc. In the administrative field, budgetary and treasury systems (Haushalts- und Kassenwesen) and political economy were taught. The VHS had full responsibility for these special courses, while the Ministry of Interior in Halle just supplied the necessary funds.

9. There was a total of 593 VHS courses given in plants and offices in Saxony-Anhalt during the instruction period October-December 1949. The following represents a break-down of this total.

- a. Single courses offered in industrial plants - 119
- b. Courses in plant Volkshochschulen and VHS extension courses in industrial plants - 373
- c. Specialized (innerbetriebliche) training courses for municipal and Landkreis councils - 101

10. MAS Volkshochschulen: Rural VHS education was initiated in Saxony-Anhalt after a Volkshochschule had been established in each city, town and larger industry. Since MAS (Machine Lending Stations) agencies were also to be organized as cultural centers for the rural population, the Kreis VHS used the various MAS as centers for the VHS rural extension courses. In the autumn of 1949, 63 MAS Volkshochschulen were established in Saxony-Anhalt, offering the following courses:

- a. One social science course (history).
- b. A course entitled "Speak and Write German Correctly".
- c. A course called "Practical Arithmetic for the Farmer".
- d. An agricultural course (soil and planting, fertilizing, animal husbandry, farm machinery, etc.).
- e. A literature course, given as a guide to using the MAS library.
- f. A domestic sewing course given by a reliable SED woman official, who, while supervising the sewing work, conducted conversations designed to influence the political thinking of the women.

The first four courses are the minimum for MAS schools, but the latter two are also often included in the program.

11. Because of the shortage of qualified local instructors, teachers are often driven out from the Kreis cities to the country. Either the Landrat or the MAS provides vehicles. Since a number of communities belong to each MAS district, VHS aspirants are brought by MAS vehicles from the surrounding communities to the MAS Volkshochschule, or, where the number of pupils warrants it, single MAS VHS courses are taught in the larger villages.
12. Evening Oberschule courses: Evening Oberschule (2) courses for people working during the day are conducted in the VHS of Halle, Magdeburg, Dessau, and Querfurt (Gottsalta). Attendance at these courses is free of charge. Books are also supplied free. These three-year courses with 16 hours of instruction per week enable students to pass Hochschule entrance examinations. These night schools correspond to the former Gymnasium night schools. The number of registrants for night classes as of 1 December 1949 was:

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| Halle | - | 101 |
| Magdeburg | - | 80 |
| Dessau | - | 74 |
| Querfurt | - | 52 |
| | | <u>307</u> |

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13. Other VHS courses: In collaboration with the Democratic Women's Federation of Germany (DFB), the VHS have also established so-called Parents' Seminars to discuss and clarify by lectures and open forum all problems related to progressive child education, particularly questions about school reform, choice of professions, etc.
14. The teaching of the Russian language and Russian politics (history of the USSR Communist Party, Leninism, etc.) was the subject of a quarrel between the VHS and the GdsF (Gesellschaft für deutsche-sowjetische Freundschaft - Society for German-Soviet Friendship). The society claimed it alone had the right to teach these courses. The VHS, on the other hand, referred to the constitution and the SMA resolutions No. 22 and 5. Through SED intervention, it was decided that the Russian language courses are to be taught conjointly with the society, whereas the VHS political courses on Russia are to be conducted only in the society's classrooms. In this same manner VHS courses have also been coordinated with the Kulturbund organizations (Arbeitsgemeinschaften des Kulturbundes).
15. The VHS objective is to become the center of the presently very heterogeneous adult education system in the Soviet Zone and to take over all strictly educational functions from the mass organizations. Present plans envisage the gradual establishment of a system whereby the VHS will be authorized to teach any courses which an organization may deem necessary for its people. The VHS will be equipped to set up such training without great difficulty, and the organization in question will have only to express its desire to the VHS and to make sufficient funds available.

Curriculum

16. The plan of instruction for all VHS in the Soviet Zone is organized as follows:
- a. General sciences.
 - b. Social studies and politics.
 - c. Natural science and mathematics.
 - d. Art and literature.
 - e. Languages.
 - f. Business courses.
 - g. Technical and agricultural training.
17. Emphasis in each VHS is to be placed on the political indoctrination of the students. For this purpose, the following are to be stressed:
- a. Social science training.
 - 1) Education for democratic understanding.
 - 2) Sympathy with People's Democracies, especially with the USSR.
 - 3) The National Front.
 - 4) Establishment of an International Peace Front.
 - b. Technical training
 - 1) Education in the new spirit of labor.
 - 2) Increase in productivity.
 - 3) Education in quality workmanship.
 - 4) Realization of the economic principle.
 - 5) Fulfillment of the National Economic Plan.
 - c. Cultural education
 - 1) Raising the over-all standard of education.
 - 2) Introduction to artistic self-expression (People's Art - Volkskunst).

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Also to be included in the VHS curriculum are courses on the DDR constitution and the Agricultural Workers' School Law.

18. The social sciences are given special consideration in each teaching plan. The following figures show clearly the progress in these courses, which were demanded by the SED.

| <u>Period of Instruction (5)</u> | <u>Number of Courses</u> | <u>Registrants</u> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| October-December | 133 | 3,925 |
| January-March | 225 | 11,099 |
| April-June | 265 | 9,771 |
| October-December | 394 | 12,302 |

Students

19. The following figures represent a break-down of the number of students, instructors, and courses in 1949. (6)

| <u>Period of Instruction</u> | <u>Courses</u> | <u>Teachers</u> | <u>Students</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| January-March | 1,717 | 1,071 | 43,580 |
| April-June | 1,699 | 1,135 | 39,730 |
| October-December | 1,361 | 1,397 | 60,096 |
| | 5,777 | 3,603 | 143,406 |

20. The social origin of the students is as follows:

- 26 percent - workers
- 12 percent - peasants and farmers
- 34 percent - white-collar workers
- 8 percent - clergymen
- 6 percent - housewives
- 14 percent - students and bourgeoisie

Management of the VHS System

21. The Soviet Zone VHS program is under the direction of the Department of Adult Education, a section of the Main Administration for Hochschulen and Learning in the Ministry of People's Education. Wolfgang Richter (SED) is in charge of the program. In the Länder the responsible agency is the VHS Commission in the Department of Cultural Enlightenment under the Land Ministry of People's Education.

22. VHS administrative personnel in Saxony-Anhalt as of 1. December 1949 were as follows:

| | |
|---|----|
| Land VHS Referent (in charge of all Volkshochschulen of the Land) | 1 |
| Executive (Hauptfachbearbeiter) | 1 |
| Typist/secretary | 1 |
| VHS superintendents | 6 |
| Office employees for the superintendents' offices | 6 |
| Full-time (hauptamtlich) directors of schools | 20 |

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| Part-time (nebenamtlich) directors of schools | 26 |
| Extension course directors | 201 |
| Full-time directors of the evening Oberschulen | 2 |
| Part-time directors of the evening Oberschulen | 2 |
| Full-time instructors | 2 |
| Part-time instructors | 1395 |
| Administrators | 30 |
| Office personnel | 87 |
| Total personnel employed | 1780 |

23. The Land VHS Referent has the task of supervising and developing further the Land VHS education system. His most important fields of activity are in:
- Organizational
 - Budget
 - Personnel
 - Cooperation with the SED and the mass organizations
 - Land propaganda
 - Approval of the school curriculum
 - Further training of the instructors

24. In Saxony-Anhalt the Land VHS Referent supervises the Land Volkshochschule and the Land Heimvolkshochschule directly, but he has under him six superintendents who oversee the other VHS in the Land. Each superintendent is in charge of a district which encompasses several Landkreise and cities. The headquarters for these districts are as follows:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| District I: | Stendal |
| District II: | Magdeburg |
| District III: | Halberstadt |
| District IV: | Dessau |
| District V: | Cospig-Anhalt |
| District VI: | Halle-Saale |

25. Once a month the Land Referent holds a meeting in Halle, which is attended by the six superintendents, the director of the Land Volkshochschule, and the director of the Land Heimvolkshochschule, which is still in the process of organization. All questions and problems which arise in VHS education are discussed in detail at these meetings, and procedures and methods are worked out.
26. The school directors have to forward quarterly project and activity reports to their respective superintendents. The superintendents summarize all the reports and forward their own report to the Land Referent. The Referent, in turn, forwards an activity report for the previous quarter and a project report for the coming quarter to the Minister of People's Education in Berlin and also to the SED Landesvorstand. School directors of Kreis, city, and giant Volkshochschulen must also report quarterly to their Kreis and local Vorstände (of the SED, presumably). The Volkshochschulen forward statistics on the number of students attending each course and the average age and social grouping of the students. From these figures the strong and weak points of the VHS system can be recognized and evaluated.
27. A constant political, professional, and pedagogical retraining of instructors has been pursued in order to invest VHS training with the desired qualities. This has been done by means of zonal and Land conferences for instructors in specialized fields (philosophers, biologists, physicists, mathematicians, etc.). Members of the SED Central Secretariat or the SED Landesvorstand

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are usually present at these conferences, and the agenda includes a major political review with a detailed discussion afterwards. Other matters taken up at these conferences are various professional problems, such as the school curriculum, the organization of material, and questions of method.

28. Instructors' conferences are also held in the various VHS districts (i.e., the district under a VHS superintendent) and in the various Kreise. These conferences, held for instructors of all subjects, are designed to further political and pedagogical training and have served especially to familiarize instructors with the special problems of scientific socialism and the two-year plan.

SED Control

29. All key positions in the VHS system are occupied by SED members. An exception to this was the appointment of three NDP members and one unaffiliated person as directors in Saxony-Anhalt. However, their appointments were authorized by the proper SED Kreisvorstand.
30. When a director is needed for appointment to a Volkshochschule, the procedure is as follows: the Land VHS Referent goes to the Kaderabteilung (formerly called the Personalpolitik Abteilung) of the SED Landesvorstand of Saxony-Anhalt. He informs the appropriate official (Sachbearbeiter), Martha Bachmann, that a new director is needed in the Kreis Volkshochschule at Osterburg, for instance. Then the Landesvorstand calls upon the Kreisvorstand's Kaderabteilung to propose a well qualified person of good character for the Osterburg Kreis Volkshochschule.
31. When the information supporting the proposal has been examined, a committee from the SED Landesvorstand's Kaderabteilung determines the acceptance or rejection of the person proposed. If he is accepted, the Kaderabteilung of the SED Landesvorstand informs the Personnel Section of the Ministry of People's Education, which in turn announces the decision to the Land VHS Referent. The Land Referent then requires this individual who has been chosen for the position to fill out a personal history questionnaire form in quadruplicate and also to submit four photographs.
32. When these supporting documents have been furnished and evaluated from a professional standpoint by the Land Referent, his appointment follows, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education in Berlin. One copy of the personal history form remains in the Personnel Section of the Ministry of People's Education in Halle, one goes, together with an appointment notification, to the finance office for pay records, while the other two questionnaires are sent to the Ministry of Education in Berlin. One of these two is given to the Ministry of State Security for examination. Only months later does the Land Referent receive the reply that the person who has been appointed is approved.
33. If the candidate appears in person before the Land Referent with his request for appointment, then the matter is submitted to the Kaderabteilung of the SED Landesvorstand as above. This section obtains information and all the details available on the applicant from the appropriate SED Kreisvorstand, the sequence described above being followed.

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34. This procedure, which ensures that only SED members obtain the key positions in the VHS system, is applicable only to the main officials in the VHS administration. The directors of the independent Volkshochschulen are themselves authorized to employ office help and to engage part-time directors and instructors for extension courses. However, these appointments need the approval of the SED Kreisvorstand's Kaderabteilung with the concurrence of the Land VHS Referent. Thus in this case, too, only persons approved by the SED can be employed.
35. The work of the VHS is politically controlled in the following manner:
- The Zone VHS Referent is controlled by the SED Central Secretariat's Department of Party Training, Culture and Education and by the SCC in Karlshorst.
 - The Land VHS Referent is controlled by the SED Landesvorstand's Department of Party Training, Culture, and Education (SED Land Culture Committee) and by the SCC for the Land.
 - The local Volkshochschule director is controlled by the SED Kreisvorstand's Department of Party Training, Culture and Education. He was previously also controlled by the Culture Officer of the Soviet Kreis Komendatura.
36. To preserve the appearance of popular and democratic participation in the VHS program, a VHS Advisory Board (Volkshochschulbeirat) was established for each independent Volkshochschule and for each of the larger extension courses. These boards assist the director in drawing up the curriculum, in conducting the advertising, and in all other important VHS matters. Representation in this VHS Advisory Board is made up of one representative of each of the following:

Landkreis (Director of the Office of People's Education)
 City or town council (Director of the Office of People's Education)
 SED
 CDU
 LDP
 NDP
 DBP
 FDGB
 Kulturbund
 GfdSf (Society for German-Soviet Friendship)
 FDJ
 VdGB (Farmers' Mutual Aid Association)
 Volksbühne (People's Theatre)
 Instructors' Council (representing VHS instructors)
 Students' Council (representing the VHS students)

Since these various representatives are by and large SED members, the SED has an overwhelming majority over the other parties. For this reason, the members of the CDU and LDP appear very seldom at the meetings of the VHS advisory Board. There is therefore hardly any distinction between the regular SED party meetings and these VHS meetings. A majority of the VHS directors are members of the SED Kreisvorstand, the FDGB, the GfdSf, the Kulturbund, or the FDJ.

Finances

38. The funds necessary for the support of the VHS are raised partly by the Land government and partly by the Landkreis and communal governments. According to an administrative order of the Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of People's Education 8 April 1948, the Landkreise are required to give at least DM 0.30 per capita a year to the VHS in quarterly allotments. These funds are used to pay

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administrative salaries, to carry out the extensive advertising campaign at the beginning of each term, to purchase teaching and student supplies, and to meet all kinds of business expenses in general, including travelling expenses of school directors, administrators, and instructors living away from the schools. In addition the Land government has guaranteed a considerable subsidy for the establishment of rural and factory VHS extension courses, for rather large advertising campaigns, and for the purchase of special items such as vehicles and motion picture equipment, etc.

39. For the year 1950, the Saxony-Anhalt VHS had at their disposal the following amounts from government funds:

Land government: DM 963,000

DM 813,000, general grant

DM 150,000, grant designed primarily for the use of the Land Volkshochschule and for further training of instructors.

Land towns and cities:

DM 800,000

DM 1,863,000 (?)

40. In addition, the VHS receive a certain amount from student fees, which are as follows:

First course: DM 6

Second course: DM 4

Third course: DM 2

Fourth course: no charge

However, the VHS give needy pupils a considerable fee reduction, and often these students are exempted from paying any fee at all. In addition, the FDGB has distributed among needy pupils IOU's for DM 6, which are negotiable in the VHS.

41. The full-time directors (hauptamtl. Direktoren) of VHS schools have been paid by the Land at the wage rate of secondary school directors (Oberstudienrat), while part-time directors of schools have received an expense compensation of DM 150 per month. The instructors are mostly teachers, engineers, party secretaries, artists, physicians, or administrators, who work only part-time for the VHS. Instructors' salaries, ranging from DM 100 to DM 150 per course, have been for the most part covered by incoming student fees, and the instructors sign from time to time a contract for their fees with the director of their school. In order to offer an incentive to persons who would be suitable to instruct in the VHS, all VHS instructors have also received extra food ration card C.
42. The VHS obtains its classrooms rent-free. Oberschule and trade school classrooms or plant offices (Betriebswerkstätten) are used, usually in the evening, but often even during working hours. Communities are obligated to make well heated and well lighted rooms available free of charge for use in VHS instruction.
43. Advertising expenses are very high. While ordinary advertising methods such as placards and movie advertising slides (Kino-diapositive) have been used by the Land Volkshochschule, the independent Volkshochschulen have carried on a special campaign of their own with posters, hand-bills, lecture lists, etc. displayed in plants, in doctors' waiting rooms and lawyers' offices. The schools have also made use of press advertisements, the official city news,

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cars equipped with loud speakers, and short lectures by instructors and directors at industrial meetings and party and mass organization meetings.

14. Independent Volkshochschulen do their own bookkeeping. The cities and Landkreise supporting them have the right to audit their accounts, but the city and Landkreise auditing officials are authorized only to check on the formulation (Feststellung) and on the correctness of the figures. The detailed auditing is done by the Land VHS Referent and the superintendents once a month. From time to time unannounced examinations are made by examiners and auditors from the Ministry for People's Education, and occasionally the audit office of the Ministry of Finance also conducts examinations.
15. There were violent quarrels among the Ministry of Finance, municipal councils, Kreis councils and the Finance Referent of the Ministry of People's Education over the VHS budget and expenses. In the Kreis, these quarrels were only settled by the school directors, who were supported by the superintendents, and the disagreement with the Finance and People's Education Ministries was resolved by the Land VHS Referent. The funds necessary for VHS education were then finally secured with the help of the SED Landesvorstand and Kreisvorstände. However, the Finance Department of the Ministry of People's Education and the Land Treasury have been slow in authorizing and paying extra allowances from Land funds, and this has occasioned annoyance and protest on the part of the VHS superintendents and school teachers.
16. The VHS program is faced with many other difficulties which interfere with its smooth operation. Because of the limited supply of gasoline or the rising cost of the gasoline (1 liter cost DM 4), activities in rural Volkshochschulen have been very seriously jeopardized; the work of supervision has also been hampered. The VHS had to put up a stiff fight with the Ministry of Industry and with the municipal and Landkreise fuel distribution offices to get enough gasoline.

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☐ Comments:

- (1) Hochschulen are advanced profession and trade schools of approximately college level.
- (2) Oberschulen are the equivalent of American high schools.
- (3) The Land Volkshochschule mentioned here is the one Volkshochschule on a Land level. It should not be confused with the other Land Volkshochschulen, that is, those under the Land jurisdiction such as Kreis and city Volkshochschulen.
- (4) It is not known whether source's reference to Hochschule is meant to imply a different, independent institution, or is an error for Volkshochschulen.
- (5) Source does not state the year in which these periods fall, but presumably they run from October 1948 through December 1949.
- (6) Although source does not specify, these figures probably refer to Saxony-Anhalt only.
- (7) These figures actually total DM 1,763,000.

The DM figures given in this report are presumably east marks.

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